

13. (Amended) A comminuted cellulosic fibrous material treatment system, comprising:

- a digester having a comminuted cellulose material inlet at the top thereof;
- a first vessel, at a first pressure, containing comminuted cellulosic fibrous material, and having a top, a bottom, and an outlet adjacent said bottom;
- a conduit having an inlet directly connected to and communicating with the outlet of said first vessel, and an outlet;
- a second vessel, having a width dimension greater than said conduit, for receiving the cellulosic material from said conduit and having a level of liquid therein; and
- a slurry pump having an inlet for receiving material from the second vessel and an outlet operatively connected to the inlet of said digester.

18. (Amended) A comminuted cellulosic fibrous material treatment system comprising:

- a digester having a comminuted cellulose material inlet at the top thereof;
 - a first vessel, at a first pressure, containing comminuted cellulosic fibrous material, and having a top, a bottom, and an outlet adjacent said bottom;
 - a conduit having an inlet communicating with the outlet of said first vessel, and an outlet;
 - a second vessel, having a width dimension greater than said conduit, for receiving the cellulosic material from said conduit and having a level of liquid therein; and
 - a slurry pump having an inlet for receiving material from the second vessel and an outlet operatively connected to the inlet of said digester, wherein
- said second vessel comprises a tank having a substantially right cylinder upper portion; and a substantially right circular cone frustum lower

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portion, said tank and said conduit being substantially concentric and in liquid communication with each other, and wherein said slurry pump is operatively connected to said conduit by a connecting conduit or transition; and wherein there is a gap between said conduit and said connecting conduit or transition; and wherein said tank substantially surrounds said gap.

21. (Amended) A comminuted cellulosic fibrous material treatment system comprising:

a digester having a comminuted cellulose material inlet at the top thereof; a first vessel, at a first pressure, containing comminuted cellulosic fibrous material, and having a top, a bottom, and an outlet adjacent said bottom;

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a conduit having an inlet communicating with the outlet of said first vessel, and an outlet;

a second vessel, having a width dimension greater than said conduit, for receiving the cellulosic material from said conduit and having a level of liquid therein; and

a slurry pump having an inlet for receiving material from the second vessel and an outlet operatively connected to the inlet of said digester, wherein

said second vessel comprises a tank, and wherein said slurry pump is operatively connected to said conduit by a connecting conduit or transition; and wherein there is a gap between said conduit and said connecting conduit or transition; and wherein said tank substantially surrounds said gap.

23. (Amended) A comminuted cellulosic fibrous material treatment system comprising:

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a digester having a comminuted cellulose material inlet at the top thereof;